

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 DHA-02 MCT-01 EB-08 OMB-01

TRSE-00 COME-00 SIL-01 LAB-04 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 /096 W

-----241655Z 024265 /53

P R 241610Z JAN 77

FM AMEMBASSY CAPE TOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5637

INFO AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SF PINT

SUBJ: COMMENTS ON OPENING OF PARLIAMENT

REF: CAPE TOWN 0091

SUMMARY: WITH NOTABLY SIMPLE CEREMONY TO EMPHASIZE THE
NEED FOR SELF-TIGHTENING, PRESIDENT DIEDERICH'S ADDRESS
AT THE OPENING OF THE 1977 PARLIAMENT SHED SOME LIMITED
LIGHT ON WHAT THE GOVERNMENT EXPECTS OUT OF THIS SESSION.
THERE WILL BE SOME ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL "ADJUSTMENTS"
FOR BLACKS, DEFENSE PREPAREDNESS MAY CALL FOR MORE
"SACRIFICES", AND ECONOMIC RESTRAINT WILL CONTINUE TO BE
NECESSARY. THE PRESIDENT SOUGHT TO ASSURE THAT FAITH IN
THE COUNTRY'S FUTURE IS JUSTIFIED. THERE WERE NO HINTS
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THAT ANY FUNDAMENTAL TAMPERING WITH THE POLICY OF
SEPARATE DEVELOPMENT IS CONTEMPLATED; SPEECH SUGGESTS
DETERMINATION TO CONTINUE SUBSTANTIALLY AS BEFORE IN DEALING
WITH BLACK UNREST. END SUMMARY.

1. SOUTH AFRICA'S 1977 PARLIAMENTARY SESSION OPENED ON
JANUARY 21 IN A SETTING OF AUSTERITY. UNLIKE PREVIOUS

YEARS, NO PARADES OR BRASS BANDS MARKED OPENING. REASON FOR ABSENCE OF NORMAL CEREMONIES WAS GOVERNMENT DESIRE TO EMPHASIZE NEED FOR CUTTING UNNECESSARY EXPENDITURES.

2. STATE PRESIDENT DIEDERICH'S OPENING ADDRESS PROVIDED LITTLE DETAIL, BUT DID SHED SOME LIGHT ON SAG ATTITUDES AND ON WHAT MIGHT BE EXPECTED OF THE GOVERNMENT DURING THIS PARLIAMENTARY SESSION. SPEECH WAS AS NOTABLE FOR WHAT WAS NOT SAID AS FOR SUBJECTS TOUCHED UPON. DESPITE BACKGROUND OF MONTHS OF INTERMITTANT RIOTING AND CONTINUING PROTEST BY URBAN BLACKS AND A FEELING OF CRISIS AMONG MANY SEGMENTS OF THE POPULATION, ISSUES OF PARTICULAR CONCERN TO BLACKS, SUCH AS EDUCATION, UNEMPLOYMENT, AND DETENTIONS RECEIVED LITTLE OR NO MENTION IN ADDRESS.

3. DIEDERICH'S ATTRIBUTED RIOTS TO "FORCES OF SUBVERSION" AND STRONGLY PRAISED "RESTRAINT" OF POLICE WHO, HE SAID, HAD MAINTAINED LAW AND ORDER "AT ALL TIMES, TO THE BENEFIT OF ALL".

4. WHILE HE DID NOT DISCUSS CAUSES OF RIOTS, WHICH ARE CURRENTLY SUBJECT OF JUDICIAL INQUIRY, DIEDERICH'S SAID SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL "ADJUSTMENTS" FOR BLACKS WILL BE MADE. ONLY SUGGESTION OF WHAT MAY BE PLANNED IS SCRAPPING OF URBAN BANTU COUNCILS FOR "COMMUNITY COUNCILS" WITH UNSPECIFIED "GREATER POWERS" (76 PRETORIA 4851). CLEAR IMPLICATION IS THAT THERE WILL BE NO TAMPERING WITH BASIC STRUCTURE OF SEPARATE DEVELOPMENT; ANY CHANGES WILL BE OF A VERY LIMITED NATURE (SUCH AS RECENT CHANGES WITH REGARD LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TO SPORTS POLICY AND XANTU EDUCATION).

5. STATEMENT ON DEFENSE PREPAREDNESS WARNED OF POSSIBLE GREATER "SACRIFICES" IN LABOR AND MATERIAL RESOURCES AND SAID INCREASING DEMANDS MAY WELL BE MADE ON MANPOWER.

6. ON ECONOMIC FRONT, SPEECH NOTED SOME PROGRESS IN COMBATTING INFLATION AND RESOLVING BALANCE PAYMENTS PROBLEM. NONETHELESS, DIEDERICH'S SAID PROGRESS HAD BEEN INSUFFICIENT AND CONTINUED TIGHT MONETARY AND FISCAL POLICIES WOULD BE REQUIRED. THIS WAS COLD COMFORT FOR THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN HOPING FOR MVLDLY REFLATIONARY POLICIES IN ORDER TO GET ECONOMY MOVING AND DEAL WITH INCREASING UNEMPLOYMENT PROBLEM, PARTICULARLY AMONG URBAN BLACKS.

7. REACTIONS TO DIEDERICH'S ADDRESS HAVE SO FAR BEEN GENERALLY MUTED, WITH OPPOSITION SPOKESMEN CRITICIZING IT AS REFLECTING A LACK OF GOVERNMENT UNDERSTANDING THAT COSMETIC MODIFICATIONS SIMPLY WILL NOT RESOLVE PROBLEMS WHICH

CLEARLY CALL FOR FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE. SOME ENGLISH-
LANGUAGE AND FOREIGN PRESSMEN FOCUS ON WHAT THEY SEE AS
DELIBERATE SAG EFFORT TO USE PRESIDENT'S SPEECH AS A MEANS
TO COUNTERACT A GLOOMY OUTLOOK STIMULATED AMONG THE PUBLIC
BY THE GRIM TONE OF NEW YEAR STATEMENTS BY THE PRIME MINISTER
AND DEFENCE MINISTER (PRETORIA 25). THESE OBSERVERS CITE
THE CONTRAST BETWEEN DIEDERICH'S ASSERTION THAT "IN AN AGE
OF... INTERDEPENDENCE, NO COUNTRY OR PEOPLE CAN EXIST IN
ISOLATION" AND THE IMPLICATION IN VORSTER'S SPEECH THAT GOING
IT ALONE COULD WELL BECOME SOUTH AFRICA'S LOT. ONE SEGMENT
OF PRESIDENT'S SPEECH WAS A "PEP TALK" WHICH STRESSED THAT
SELF-CONFIDENCE AND FAITH IN THE FUTURE WERE ESSENTIAL AND
ASSURED THAT, THROUGH CONTRIBUTIONS TO MANKIND AND EXCELLENCE
IN ARTS, SCIENCE, EDUCATION, ETC., THE IMPORTANCE OF SOUTH
AFRICA WILL BECOME APPARENT AND THE "SENSE OF MISSION"
OF ITS PEOPLE WILL TAKE SHAPE. FOR THOSE WHO HAD TAKEN
THEIR CUE FROM THE NEW YEAR'S STATEMENTS, DIEDERICH'S
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SPEECH WAS NOT AS TOUGH AND ISOLATIONIST AS THEY HAD
EXPECTED.
BOWDLER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
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Channel Indicators: n/a
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Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 24-Jan-1977 12:00:00 am
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Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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SAS ID: 3524947
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Subject: COMMENTS ON OPENING OF PARLIAMENT
TAGS: PINT, SF
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Type: TE
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